Montana CSPD

The Office of Public Instruction Special Education Endorsement Project was created to help school districts fill vacant special education teaching positions.

The project is part of Montana's Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD), which is included under Montana Administrative Rule (ARM) number 10.16.3135 in the Montana State IDEA Plan and is regulated by Accreditation and Licensure Rule 10.55.707. School districts and cooperatives participating in the OPI Special Education Endorsement Project are subject to all administrative rules of the Montana Board of Public Education.

Montana CSPD works to ensure that all education personnel are adequately prepared and receive continuing education.

Revised: Summer 2026

For questions contact:
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Montana OPI Special Education
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Phone: 406-444-0299

Link to Special Education Endorsement Project Website

See our website at:

https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/School-Climate-Student-Wellness/Special-Education

OPI Special Education Endorsement Project

Federally funded by the Montana Office of Public Instruction under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEAs that Work
Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

Criteria for Acceptance

- To serve the whole state of Montana, only one application from a district may be eligible for admission. Applications submitted by September 1 will be given priority.
- The school district or special education cooperative must have advertised the special education vacancy statewide on https://apps.opi.mt.gov/MTJobsForTeachers/ website for a minimum of one month and provide documentation to that effect.
- The district must state that no special education endorsed applicants applied for the position.
- The candidate must hold a Class 1 or 2 (Class 5 candidates are not eligible) Montana Teaching Certificate and have been offered and signed a contract for the advertised special education teaching position.
- All candidates admitted to the project need a mentor for their first year and the district should identify the mentor. The mentor should have three years of teaching in special education and have completed training in mentoring which can be through their school district. If there is no mentor available within the district, then arrangements to locate a mentor will be made with the Project Director.
- The candidate must complete their special education endorsement within three years of their project acceptance date. This includes the program requirement of student teaching in their own classroom.
- Candidates admitted to the project must hold a full-time special education teaching position in Montana public schools for two years after obtaining the special education endorsement.

To be accepted the candidate will be required to sign a 5-year contract with OPI that stipulates the following:

- Should the candidate fail to complete the required coursework to obtain the special education endorsement within three years from the date of the agreement, the candidate will be required to repay all sums paid by the OPI under the agreement.
- Should the candidate fail to complete the required two years of service in a Montana school, the candidate will repay all sums paid by the OPI under the agreement.

Submit the following documents to:
ayoung3@mt.gov

- Completed application form.
- Completed participation agreement signed by all stakeholders.
- Letter from the candidate describing their teaching experience and commitment to teaching in the school.
- Letter from school district or special education cooperative verifying the applicant has been offered and signed a contract.
- Copy of the position advertisement.
- Copy of Montana Teaching Certificate: Class 1 or Class 2 (Class 5 candidates are not eligible).
- Copies of unofficial transcripts from all universities the applicant has attended that show the semester of student teaching and degree or degrees.
- Plan of Study from the participating MT Institution of Higher Education, signed by the advisor.

Participating Institutions of Higher Education

Carroll College
Dr. Kathleen Gilboy
406-447-4376
kagilboy@carroll.edu

Montana State University
Dr. Leslie Rogers
406-994-3879
leslie.rogers1@montana.edu

Montana State University Billings
Dr. Mel Sullivan-Walker
406-657-2335
Melissa.Walker4@msubillings.edu

University of Montana
Dr. Trent Atkins
406-243-4978
trent.atkins@mso.umt.edu

Dr. Morgen Alwell
406-243-5512
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